

Listing of Claims

1 – 71. (Cancelled)

72. (Currently Amended) A gaming console for playing a base game, the gaming console comprising: having

a display configured to display images of the base game; [[,]] and

a game controller configured to arranged to control the images to be displayed on the display, the game controller being arranged to play [[a]] the base game wherein one or more random events are caused to be displayed on the display and, if a predefined winning event or combination of events results, the machine awards a prize, the console being characterized in that an animated character is periodically displayed to communicate information to the player, the character being arranged to appear superimposed over any game screen currently displayed at the time the character is displayed, and to detect a triggering event, to generate an of the appearance of [[the]] a character on the display having an association with first and second games, wherein the first game is different from the second game, and wherein the first game is different from the base game being associated with a function or feature selected from a plurality of functions or features associated with the gaming console, wherein the triggering event of the appearance of the character is random and related to a bet placed by the player.

73. (Currently Amended) The console of as claimed in claim 72, wherein the selection of the function or feature from the plurality of functions or features is the first and second games associated with the character are independent of [[the]] an outcome of the current game.

74. (Currently Amended) The console of as claimed in claim 72, wherein each different type of function or feature available in one game will have each of the first and second games

associated with the character includes an independent, predetermined probability of being triggered ~~for each game played.~~

75 – 76. (Cancelled)

77. (Currently Amended) The console of as claimed in claim 72, wherein at least one of the first and second games commences ~~a function or feature which is triggered will not commence until after [[the]] a completion of the entire base game in progress when the trigger occurred.~~

78. (Currently Amended) The console of as claimed in claim 77, wherein ~~the selected function or feature~~ at least one of the first and second games commences before ~~the player has been given the opportunity to a bet is placed~~ on another game.

79. (Currently Amended) The console of as claimed in claim 72 ~~[[76]]~~, wherein ~~if more than one different function or feature is triggered from the same bet, the selected functions or features will the first and second games commence one at a time such that as one is completed the next one will commence, and all of the triggered functions or features will be completed before the player is given the opportunity to bet on another game.~~

80. (Currently Amended) The console of as claimed in claim 72, wherein the base game provided on the console is a video simulation of a spinning reel game and one of the bonus features the first and second games is an animated spinning reel bonus game in which one or more of a plurality of simulated reels, each carrying a plurality of symbols, are caused to randomly spin and stop, and if a predetermined combination of symbols is displayed a prize associated with the combination is awarded.

81 – 83. (Cancelled)

84. (Currently Amended) The console of as-claimed-in claim 80, wherein ~~the animation of the character causing the reel to spin will include~~ the controller is further configured to activate the character activating to spin each of the reels ~~to be spun~~.

85 – 86. (Cancelled)

87. (Currently Amended) The console of as-claimed-in claim 80, wherein, during at least one of the first and second games the bonus game, while the reels are spinning, the character is further configured to treat one of the reels ~~will indicate a reel to be treated~~ as a bonus reel and when the reels stop spinning, the character is further configured to treat the bonus indicated reel ~~will be treated~~ as having stopped on a wild symbol which substitutes for all symbols on ~~[[that]]~~ the bonus reel.

88. (Currently Amended) The console of as-claimed-in claim 87, wherein the character is further configured to climb the bonus reel ~~will be indicated by the character climbing into the foreground of that reel~~.

89. (Currently Amended) The console of as-claimed-in claim 72, wherein the base game provided on the console is a video simulation of a spinning reel game and wherein the character is configured to offer a selection between a plurality of options, each of the options is associated with at least one of a hidden prize and a bonus game during one of the first and second games ~~bonus features is a game in which the character offers a selection between two or more options with different offers of hidden prizes or bonus games being associated with each option such that~~

~~when the player chooses one of the options the hidden offer associated with the selected option is revealed and awarded to the player.~~

90. (Currently Amended) The console of as claimed in claim 89, wherein at least one of the first and second games ~~the feature~~ comprises the character holding ~~two objects~~ and offering the player a choice between ~~the two~~ a plurality of objects.

91. (Currently Amended) The console of as claimed in claim 90, wherein the objects ~~[[are]]~~ include a money representation and a box representation.

92. (Currently Amended) The console of as claimed in claim 91, wherein the controller is further configured to prompt for a choice between ~~the player is asked to choose one or the other~~ of the money representation ~~[[or]]~~ and the box representation.

93. (Currently Amended) The console of as claimed in claim 90, wherein, ~~[[if]]~~ after one of the objects is chosen, the controller is configured to ~~it will~~ reveal that ~~the player has been~~ awarded a number of free games ~~of the type offered as standard games~~ on the console has been awarded, and to apply a multiplier ~~will be applied~~ to all prizes won during those free games.

94. (Currently Amended) The console of as claimed in claim 90, wherein ~~[[if]]~~ after one of the object is chosen, the controller is configured to determine a variable prize ~~will be determined~~ from a range of possible prizes.

95. (Currently Amended) The console ~~of as claimed in~~ claim 72, wherein the base game provided on the console is a video simulations of a spinning reel game and wherein the character is configured to randomly award one of the first and second games, wherein at least one of the first and second games is ~~bonus features is awarded by the character randomly awarding a game~~ feature specific to the base game ~~being played~~.

96. (Cancelled)

97. (Currently Amended) The console ~~of as claimed in~~ claim 72, wherein the base game provided on the console is a video simulations of a spinning reel game and wherein the character is configured to ~~one of the bonus features is by awarded by the character~~ appear intermittently and randomly appearing, entering the base game screen, and to award ~~awarding~~ a variable random bonus prize in at least one of the first and second games.

98 – 102. (Cancelled)

103. (Currently Amended) The console ~~of as claimed in~~ claim 72, wherein the character is configured to deliver ~~delivers~~ visual messages in the form of symbols and/or text.

104 – 105. (Cancelled)

106. (Currently Amended) The console ~~of as claimed in~~ claim 72, wherein the triggering event comprises at least one ~~of the character to appear is achieved by at least one of the following~~ events:

- a. a periodic trigger;
- b. a random trigger;
- c. an occurrence of an external trigger event;
- d. ~~[[the]]~~ an occurrence of one or more specific game states;
- e. ~~[[the]]~~ an occurrence of one or more specific console states.

107. (Currently Amended) The console ~~of as claimed in claim 72~~, wherein the triggering event comprises at least one of the character to appear is achieved by at least one of the following events:

- (a) ~~[[the]]~~ an occurrence of a game state ~~where the player must make wherein a decision is made to position where the character may appear~~, to offer advice on probabilities of various possible outcomes, ~~this trigger may be automatic or prompted by the player pressing a button;~~
- (b) ~~[[the]]~~ an offering of bonus prizes as incentives to ~~players who have had~~ after long nonwinning stretches have been determined;
- (c) ~~[[the]]~~ an offering game specific bonus features to ~~players who have had~~ after a long stretch where the game specific bonus feature has not been awarded;
- (d) ~~announcing~~ an announcement of a bonus game or a series of games awarded to the player;
- (e) ~~announcing the~~ an announcement of winning of a mystery jackpot, either on the ~~winning~~ console, or a console adjacent the ~~winning~~ console;
- (f) ~~providing~~ wins in “near-miss” situations by “nudging” a symbol into a winning position;

- (g) ~~suggesting the an~~ ordering of a taxi ~~after the base game has been active~~ for a player ~~who has been observed to have been present for a long period or when whose play is erratic-game play behavior has been detected and may indicate intoxication;~~
- (h) ~~periodically offer a periodical offering of a~~ drink or food ~~ordering services; [[or]]~~
- (i) ~~periodically a periodical provision of~~ provide public service information and information on services, facilities and entertainment programs offered ~~to patrons; [[or]]~~
- (j) ~~advising a player an offering of an advice~~ when the console had detected a fault condition in which case the interface character explains ~~will explain~~ the fault to the player.

108. (Currently Amended) The console of ~~as claimed in~~ claim 72, wherein the character is configured ~~arranged~~ to appear on a bank of consoles in a coordinated manner.

109. (Currently Amended) The console of ~~as claimed in~~ claim 108, wherein the character is configured to appear ~~appears~~ simultaneously on all of the consoles in a bank.

110. (Currently Amended) The console of ~~as claimed in~~ claim 108, wherein the character is configured to appear only ~~appears~~ on one of the consoles in the bank at any one time.

111. (Currently Amended) The console of ~~as claimed in~~ claim 108, wherein the character is configured to be animated to ~~progress~~ walk from one console to an adjacent console ~~the next~~, disappearing from one screen as ~~[[it] the character~~ appears on the next.

112. (Currently Amended) The console of as-claimed-in claim 108, wherein, when a player wins a jackpot is won, the character is further configured to announce ~~announces~~ the win to ~~players playing~~ winning of the jackpot to adjacent consoles ~~in the vicinity of the winning player's console.~~

113. (Currently Amended) The console of as-claimed-in claim 108, wherein the console is a first console among a bank of consoles, when the character appears on one of the consoles ~~in a bank of consoles~~, to award a bonus, the character is further configured to announce simultaneously ~~announces its~~ a presence of the bonus award to ~~players playing on~~ other consoles in the ~~[[same]]~~ bank of consoles.

114. (Currently Amended) The console of as-claimed-in claim 72, wherein, the character is further configured to initiate ~~initiates tournaments~~ a tournament ~~by appearing on each the console~~ when the console is eligible for the tournament, and to provide instructions at ~~instruct or advise the player of the console each of those consoles.~~

115 – 227. (Cancelled)

228. (New) A gaming machine comprising:

a display configured to display images of a base game; and

a game controller configured to detect an occurrence of a trigger event, to associate each of a first and second games with a value, the first game being different from the second game and the base game, and to randomly and selective at least one of the first and second games to be played with the machine through the display based on a probability value, subsequent to the detection of the occurrence of the trigger event.

229. (New) The gaming machine of claim 228, wherein the game controller is further configured to play the first and second games sequentially.

230. (New) The gaming machine of claim 228, wherein the occurrence of the trigger event is based on an average number of times the base game is played.

231. (New) The gaming machine of claim 230, wherein the occurrence of the trigger event is further based on a number of paylines played during a play of the base game.

232. (New) The gaming machine of claim 230, wherein the occurrence of the trigger event is independent of an outcome of the base game.

233. (New) The gaming machine of claim 230, wherein the occurrence is configured to occur during the base game.

234. (New) The gaming machine of claim 228, wherein each of the first and second games comprises an animated character, and wherein the animated character is configured to perform an action in order to effect a visual depiction of a prize being awarded.

235. (New) A method for use with a gaming machine playing a base game, the method comprising:

detecting an occurrence of a trigger event;

associating each of a plurality of second unique games with a probability value to be played with the machine; and

subsequent to the detection of the occurrence of the trigger event, randomly selecting at least one of the plurality of unique second games based on the probability value.

236. (New) The method of claim 235, further comprising playing at least two of the second unique games sequentially.

237. (New) The method of claim 235, wherein detecting the occurrence of a trigger event further comprises determining an average number of times the base game is played.

238. (New) The method of claim 237, wherein detecting the occurrence of a trigger event further comprises determining a number of paylines played in the base game.

239 (New) The method of claim 237, wherein the occurrence of the trigger event is independent of an outcome of the first game.

240. (New) The method of claim 237, wherein detecting the occurrence of a trigger event further comprises determining the trigger event during the base game.

241. (New) The method of claim 235, wherein each of the unique second games comprises an animated character, the method further comprising configuring the animated character to effect a visual depiction of a prize being awarded.